

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 TRSE-00 OMB-01 ACDA-07 IO-13 /079 W
-----261910Z 060625 /42

R 261832Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8608
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY MADRID

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 09062

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, GW, IT, SP, FR
SUBJECT: KOHL ON SOUTHERN EUROPE AND CDU FOREIGN
RELATIONS

REF: ROME 8124

SUMMARY: CDU LEADER KOHL HAS TOLD ME THAT HE IS SOME-
WHAT LESS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT ITALY THAN HE HAD BEEN BE-
FORE HIS RECENT VISIT THERE, AND THAT HE IS ALSO
OPTIMISTIC ABOUT SPAIN THOUGH HE BELIEVES PEOPLE UNDER-
ESTIMATE THE PROBLEMS THAT REMAIN THERE. HE IS GENERALLY
PLEASED WITH THE EXPANSION OF THE CDU'S INTERNATIONAL
CONTACTS, BUT CONCERNED ABOUT THE DANGERS OF INCREASING
COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN WHAT HE TERMED THE "LATIN
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES." END SUMMARY

1. HELMUT KOHL, LEADER OF THE CDU OPPOSITION, TOLD ME
THE FOLLOWING THINGS MAY 25 ABOUT HIS IMPRESSIONS FROM HIS
RECENT TRIP AROUND SOUTHERN EUROPE:

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ITALY.

--KOHL WAS VERY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT ITALY BEFORE
HIS RECENT VISIT THERE, FEARING THE IMMINENCE OF THE
"HISTORIC COMPROMISE." HE IS NOW MUCH LESS PESSIMISTIC
BECAUSE, HAVING SPOKEN TO MANY DC LEADERS, HE BELIEVES

THEY FULLY RECOGNIZE THE DANGERS.

--THE DC IS NOW DISCUSSING INDIVIDUAL ITEMS OF LEGISLATION WITH THE PCI. THIS IS ACCEPTABLE TO THE CDU. HOWEVER, IF THE DC GOES SO FAR AS TO DISCUSS THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAM WITH THE PCI, OR EVEN TO INVITE THE PCI INTO THE GOVERNMENT, THE CDU WOULD OBJECT AND WOULD STOP THE SUPPORT THAT IT IS GIVING THE DC.

--THE DC ITSELF APPEARS TO RECOGNIZE THE DANGERS OF MOVING ANY FURTHER, IN PART BECAUSE IT REALIZES THAT THE PARTY COULD WELL SPLIT. IF IT WERE TO SPLIT, THE CDU WOULD SUPPORT THAT PART OF THE DC WHICH OPPOSED THE "HISTORIC COMPROMISE."

--THE DC'S MAIN CONCERN APPEARS TO BE TO REMAIN IN OFFICE UNTIL MAY, 1978, BECAUSE THAT IS SIX MONTHS BEFORE THE ITALIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND THE PRESIDENT CANNOT DISSOLVE THE PARLIAMENT DURING THOSE SIX MONTHS. THEREFORE, LEONE WOULD NOT BE FACED WITH THE BURDEN OF DISSOLVING THE PARLIAMENT AND CALLING FOR NEW PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS ONCE AGAIN.

--THE CDU WILL EXPAND ITS COOPERATION WITH THE DC AND WILL SUPPORT IT (KOHL SUGGESTED FINANCIALLY). (SEE REFTEL.)

SPAIN.

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--THE SITUATION IN SPAIN IS BETTER THAN ANY-BODY HAD DARED TO HOPE WHEN FRANCO PASSED AWAY. THE KING AND SUAREZ ARE IMPRESSIVE PERSONALITIES, AND THE MOVEMENT TOWARD DEMOCRACY APPEARS DEEPLY ROOTED.

--ONE REASON FOR KOHL'S OPTIMISM IS THE LIKELIHOOD THAT A STRONG CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC GROUPING WILL EMERGE, PROBABLY WITH SUAREZ AS ITS LEADER, AND THAT THIS WILL GIVE SPAIN THE KIND OF SOLID CENTER GROUPING WHICH IS ESSENTIAL FOR A MODERN INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY.

--KOHL IS WORRIED ABOUT THE TENDENCY OF MANY SPANISH POLITICAL FIGURES TO INTELLECTUALIZE THEIR PROBLEMS AND THE SOLUTIONS TO THOSE PROBLEMS. AT TIMES THEY TALK AS IF THEY HAD BEEN MEMBERS OF THE GERMAN PAULSKIRCHE ASSEMBLY OF 1848-49. THEY NEED TO THINK MORE IN TERMS OF GETTING ORGANIZED IN ORDER TO COMPETE EFFECTIVELY.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 09062

--KOHL IS ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE DANGER
THAT THE SPANISH PARTIES DO NOT REALIZE THAT THE PRESENT
SITUATION IS NOT PERMANENT, AND THAT THERE WILL HAVE
TO BE MANY PARTY REALIGNMENTS AND PROBABLY THE DIS-
APPEARANCE OF SOME PARTIES AS WELL AS THE APPEARANCE
OF OTHER NEW ONES BEFORE ANY KIND OF PERMANENT POLITICAL
SPECTRUM EMERGES. (WHAT PARTICULARLY SEEMED TO WORRY
KOHL WAS THAT SPAIN HAD PASSED SO EASILY FROM DICTATOR-
SHIP TO DEMOCRACY THAT MANY SPANIARDS MIGHT NOT BE AS
SENSITIVE AS THEY SHOULD BE TO THE RESTRAINT REQUIRED
IN ORDER TO MAKE A DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL SYSTEM FUNCTION.
COMPARING SPAIN WITH POST-NAZI GERMANY, HE OBSERVED THAT
SPAIN HAD HAD 40 YEARS OF DICTATORSHIP WHEREAS GERMANY
HAD HAD ONLY 12, AND THAT THE NAZIS COULD EASILY BE
EXPUNGED IN GERMANY WHEREAS THE FRANQUISTAS WERE STILL
IN MANY POWERFUL POSITIONS IN SPAIN.)

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OTHER EUROPEAN POLITICAL GROUPS.

--THE CDU IS DEVELOPING VERY GOOD TIES WITH THE ENGLISH CONSERVATIVES, WHICH PLEASES KOHL IMMENSELY. IT IS ALSO IMPROVING ITS TIES WITH THE APPROPRIATE BELGIAN AND DUTCH PARTIES.

--THE CDU IS BECOMING THE STRONGEST CHRISAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN EUROPE, BUT KOHL KNOWS THAT IT JSCANNOT NOW OR EVEN SOON ASPIRE TO LEADING POSITIONS IN THE EUROPEAN ASSEMBLY.

--IT IS IMPORTANT NOT TO LET THE LATIN EUROPEAN BRAND OF COMMUNISM (I.E., THE ITALIAN, SPANISH AND FRENCH) COME INTO POSITIONS OF POWER BECAUSE IT CLAIMS INDEPENDENCE FROM MOSCOW. HAVING THOSE COMMUNIST PARTIES COME TO POWER WOULD MEAN THE SUBVERSION OF NORTHERN EUROPE AND THE UNDERMINING OF THE DEFENSE OF NORTHERN EUROPE FROM THE SOUTH.

2. COMMENT: WE DO NOT KNOW HOW ACCURATE KOHL'S OBSERVATIONS MAY BE, BUT REPORT THEM AS AN INDICATION OF HIS PERCEPTIONS AND OF WHERE THE CDU NOW APPEARS DETERMINED TO OFFER SUPPORT.
STOESSEL

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